

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-10 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00

RSC-01 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CEQ-01 EPA-01 /049 W

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P 162226Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4495

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 2981

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2,2

TAGS: SENV, PINR, CA

SUBJECT: MADAME JEANNE SUAVE, MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT

NOFORN

FOR SCI/EN- BENGELSDORF

REF: TELECON BENGELSDORF/HUDSON, SEPT. 16, 1974

1. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO REFTELECON IN WHICH SCI/EN REQUESTED EMBASSY VIEWS CONCERNING THE SUITABILITY OF CANADA'S MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT, MADAME JEANNE SUAVE, FOR THE POSITION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE OECD ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE: MADAME SUAVE WOULD HAVE THE ADVANTAGES OF (A) FLUENCY IN BOTH ENGLISH AND FRENCH, (B) A CHARMING PERSONALITY, AND (C) NO KNOWN A PRIORI BIASES AGAINST THE U.S. OR ANY OF OUR MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL POSTIIONS.

2. DESPITE FOREGOING ADVANTAGES, DEPT SHOULD BE AWARE IN CONSIDERING SUPPORT FOR MADAME SUAVE OF THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND:
A. MADAME SUAVE IS A JOURNALIST AND HAS BOTH ASSETS AND LIABILITIES OF A GOOD JORNALIST. AMONG THE FORMER MUST BE COUNTED CURIOSITY AND AGGRESSIVENESS; AMONG THE LATTER MUST BE COUNTED VIRTUALLY NO BACKGROUND IN SCIENTIFIC OR ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND VERY LITTLE DEMONSTRATED INTEREST IN ACQUIRING SUCH SUBSTANTIVE BACKGROUND.

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B. DURING HER TENURE AS MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SHE ACQUIRED THE REPUTATION OF BEING MORE INTERESTED IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND PUTTING THE NAME OF HER MINISTRY BEFORE THE PUBLIC THAN IN DEVELOPING A HARDHITTING, WELL-ORGANIZED PROGRAM TO SUPPORT CANADIAN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

C. A FINAL POINT TO BE CONSIDERED IS THAT MADAME SUAVE HAS DEMONSTRATED A WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT HER BIASES IN THE FACE OF TRADITION. MOST CANADIAN MINISTRIES ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE SOME BALANCE BETWEEN ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE SENIOR OFFICIALS. DURING HER TENURE AS MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SHE BLANTANLTY "PACKED" THE MINISTRY WITH A VIRTUALLY SOLID PHALANX OF FRANCOPHONES IN SENIOR POSITIONS.

3. EMBASSY IS NOT FULLY AWARE OF THE DEPT'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE UTILIZATION OF THE OECD ENVIRONEMNTAL COMMITTEE. UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES WE CAN VISUALIZE A SITUATION WHEREIN MADAME SUAVE MIGHT PERFORM CREDITABLY AND BE A NET ASSET. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE INFORMATION, HOWEVER, WE WOULD RECOMMEND CAUTION IN SEEKING OR SUPPORTING HER CANDIDACY.

PORTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ENVIRONMENT, NOMINATION, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, COMMITTEES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974OTTAWA02981
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740259-1129
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740942/aaaabjsf.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SCI
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: TELECON BENGELSDORF/HUDSON, SEPT. 16, , 1974
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 APR 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <16-Aug-2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MADAME JEANNE SUAVE, MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT NOFORN
TAGS: SENV, PINR, CA, (SUAVE, JEANNE MADAME)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005